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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 004270

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [IN](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: ADVANI RESIGNATION THROWS THE BJP INTO TURMOIL

REF: NEW DELHI 4232

Classified By: Charge Bob Blake, for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

**¶1.** (U) BJP President LK Advani threw his party into turmoil on June 7 when he abruptly announced his resignation after a tempest erupted following his recent visit to Pakistan (Reftel). In his letter of resignation Advani stood by his remarks in Pakistan praising the country's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah, maintaining that "I have not done and said anything in Pakistan that I need to review," and that his resignation would be in the party's best interest.

**¶2.** (U) The press reported that a number of BJP leaders have attempted to convince Advani to withdraw his resignation. Describing the reactions of some hard-line Hindu nationalists in the party allied to the RSS and VHP to his statements in Pakistan as "most unfortunate," he insisted that he would not withdraw his resignation. Advani purportedly told party colleagues that he was particularly hurt by statements from VHP leader Pravin Togadia labeling him a "traitor." Former Prime Minister Vajpayee, who is currently vacationing in Himachal Pradesh, has cut short his trip and is returning to New Delhi to meet with senior party leaders.

**¶3.** (C) Embassy contacts report that should attempts to get Advani to withdraw his resignation fail, the BJP will turn to selecting a successor. The Sangh Parivar (Hindu family of organizations) purportedly hopes to convince the BJP to name its candidate Ram Manohar Joshi to the post, with party moderates backing former party President Venkaiah Naidu. Post will provide detailed analysis septel.

BLAKE